

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the application as presently amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-14 are currently pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 3, and Claim 3 has been cancelled. In addition, Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form as an independent claim. No new matter has been added.

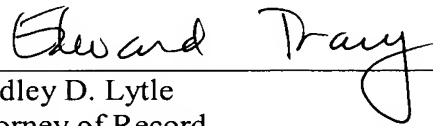
By way of summary, the Official Action presented the following issues: Claims 1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Haraguchi et al. (U.S. 5,077,567; hereinafter Haraguchi) in view of Maeno et al. (U.S. 4,666,274; hereinafter Maeno). Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Haraguchi in view of Maeno and further in view of Maitani et al. (U.S. 4,273,434; hereinafter Maitani). Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Haraguchi in view of Maeno and further in view of Kropatsch (U.S. 4,770,426). Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Haraguchi in view of Maeno and further in view of Akira (JP 02-201340).

In addition, Claims 3, 4 and 6 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

At the outset Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter with respect to Claims 3, 4 and 6. In response to the indication of allowable subject matter, Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 3. In addition, Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants believe that all of the rejections in the case have been overcome and that the application should now be in condition for allowance. An early indication to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward Tracy", is written over a horizontal line.

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